



Economic and Social Council

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Geneva, 6-31 July 2009

Item 2 (b) of the provisional agenda*

**Annual ministerial review: implementing the
internationally agreed goals and commitments
in regard to global public health**

**Statement submitted by Asia Darshana, a non-governmental
organization in consultative status with the Economic and
Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2009/100.



Statement*

Prevention will save us

Asia Darshana, an NGO in Roster Consultative Status with ECOSOC has worked for several years in the area of traditional medicine emphasizing the role of preventive medicine. Asia Darshana has been carrying out this work through courses, conferences, publications of the ancient spiritual disciplines and oriental medicine, particularly through the practise of Yoga and Ayurveda. The programme is called, "Prevention will save us".

"Prevention will save us" focuses on traditional medicines and professional collaboration between experts of holistic therapies, yoga master and public hospitals, schools, universities, hospices for the elderly, kindergartens, etc.

It is necessary to invest in prevention and on integration of the two disciplines, the ancient and traditional methodologies on one end and emphasizing its role in prevention and the modern medicine for its scientific advances.

At the policy level, it is essential to improve public health in general, especially for the people living in poverty who do not have access to expensive medicines through the promotion of traditional medicine. This will mean to pull down expenses for the drug consumption, the absences from the workplaces, and to reorganize part of the world-wide economies.

If a person is well in the body and above all from the psycho-emotional point of view, he/she manages better the family, the job atmosphere, the society. In a moment of total economic crisis, it is pertinent to reduce costs, and for promoting better public health, there is nothing better than to adopt traditional methods. According to ancient traditional medicines *all it is mind*, the Yoga, the massages and the ayurvedic manual techniques, the use of medical herbs (lacking in collateral effects), act mostly on the equilibrium that it maintains and it restores the total health. The Traditional Medicine and Yoga represent the greatest system accessible, economic and to all.

The project "The prevention will save us" has obtained the consent of Indian Embassy in Rome, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Policies. The first public hospital pilot will be "Policlinico Gemelli" in Rome, home to a famous Research University, also known as the Pope's hospital, State of the Vatican controlled. Yoga will be introduced first in collaboration with the national public health system in the area of Geriatrics. Classes will be held in the presence of a doctor to ensure close cooperation with a very expert and highly qualified master yoga. This initiative will be documented through a documentary that will be distributed, with the support of public administration, in the most important Italian hospitals.

It is important to note here that there is a distinct acknowledgement and recognition of the role of traditional medicine also in the developed world.

* Issued without formal editing.



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Substantive session of 2009

Geneva, 6-31 July 2009

Item 2 (b) of the provisional agenda*

Annual ministerial review: implementing the internationally
agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health

Statement submitted by the Fondation Ostad Elahi: éthique et solidarité humaine, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being
circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council
resolution 1996/31.

* E/2009.100.

Statement

Report of the round table of the Fondation Ostad Elahi on the general theme for 2009: "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health"

At the initiative of the Fondation Ostad Elahi: éthique et solidarité humaine, and under the auspices of the International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions, on 13 February 2009, a round table of experts was convened in Paris at the Economic, Social and Environmental Council of the French Republic to discuss the theme of the 2009 annual ministerial review. The round table, which comprised representatives of the United Nations and the French Parliament, doctors, researchers and one non-governmental organization, considered the topic "Health-care ethics in Africa and the achievement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals", with a view to the formulation of recommendations. The purpose of the round table was to consider how health-care ethics could contribute to the advancement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals, on the theory that it is possible to effect changes in professional practices related to ethical issues and that these changes can have immediate and wide-ranging effects on the quality of patient care.

Although the round-table experts noted that there were deficiencies in the quality of health care, they indicated that many of the obstacles to the implementation of health-care ethics were linked primarily to the political, economic and social functioning of developing countries. These obstacles include a lack of basic health infrastructure, a lack of training resources, the overlapping of several sets of standards with no real convergence, the lack of scientific vocabulary in African languages, etc. This has resulted in makeshift systems and the application of relative ethics.

Isolated examples of good practices have nevertheless emerged, such as medical treatment of persons living with HIV and the development of clinical research, with the establishment of written regulations in accordance with international standards. It might be useful to further explore the possibility of using the existing health research ethics committees as a model for health-care ethics committees. Health-care professionals who have set the bar high with respect to personal ethics and the provider-patient relationship have also helped considerably to improve the quality of health care. These improvements could serve as an example, thereby benefiting the health system as a whole.

Awareness of patients' rights is increasing as a result of actions by patient associations, which promote the principle of informed consent and the elaboration of codes of ethics, act as mediators, advise patients, seek damages, etc. To reduce the waiting period between diagnosis and treatment, some patient associations compile and distribute treatment centre directories that list the services provided, the hours of operation, fees, etc.

In general, future efforts should focus on ensuring that training programmes emphasize the importance of treating patients as human beings; encouraging the various actors, including health-care professionals, politicians and international organizations, to reflect on their own practices; and identifying, supporting, promoting and replicating good practices.



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**Annual ministerial review: implementing the
internationally agreed goals and commitments
in regard to global public health**

**Statement submitted by China NGO Network for International
Exchanges, a non-governmental organization in consultative
status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2009/100.



Statement*

We applaud the decision to take "implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health" as the theme for the annual ministerial review to be held by the Economic and Social Council in Geneva in July 2009. Public health is of global concern and is one of the issues highlighted and emphasized by the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Three of the eight Millennium Development Goals, namely, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases, are directly related to public health.

Despite progress in public-health programmes, situations are not all bright across the world due to multiple factors such as different economic development levels, historical background and cultural conventions. In many countries and regions, there is still a serious shortage of medical services and public-health awareness. Health care for women and children is still depressingly far off. While conventional infectious diseases are still spreading in some areas, new epidemics are cropping up now and then and some chronic, occupational and endemic diseases are menacing the physical and mental well-being of the population. Bad habits and unwholesome ways of life such as smoking, unhealthy diet and lack of hygiene are still rife among many people. While the welfare public-health system is being stretched to its limits, the market mechanism has been proved not to be the right medicine. The current world financial and economic crises pose a new hurdle to further promotion of health services.

We believe that every human being has the right to basic public-health services including health information and education. Heightened health awareness and better health facilities are important guarantees for quality life and attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. To realize the Millennium Development Goals by raising public-health awareness and making people healthier in body and mind are not only an urgent task for developing countries but also a common challenge facing the whole international community. Health promotion, education and publicity campaigns are important means to raise public health awareness for all stakeholders.

We strongly recommend:

The United Nations, which has an irreplaceable role to play in promoting global public-health endeavours and in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, should take reinforced steps to enhance dialogues between the South and the North, facilitate South-South cooperation, build more platforms of exchanges and encourage global partnership for development, all with a view to achieving the health-related goals set in the Millennium Development Goals.

The World Health Organization, as the only health agency in the United Nations system shouldering the responsibility of guiding and coordinating global health policies and efforts,

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should encourage information dissemination, experience sharing and technology transfer, seek to install a permanent global mechanism for disease prevention, control and monitoring, work to reduce child mortality, improve maternal health and combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases, prevent and control outbreaks of new pandemics like severe acute respiratory syndrome and avian influenza, and take actions to deal with other public-health problems such as tobacco use and alcoholism.

Governments should honour their commitments to the Millennium Development Goals and take it as a priority goal of national development to ensure equal access to basic public-health services for all. They should map out people-centred public-health policy strategies and increase budgetary input in national public-health programmes to meet the targets for sustainable development of the health-care system, strengthen capacity-building in education, publicity and other public health-related undertakings and show special favour to rural areas and underprivileged people. State medical insurance coverage should be further extended to the overall population.

The private sector should develop a greater sense of corporate social responsibility and ethics and fulfil its due obligations by supporting the efforts to uplift public-health awareness and literacy. Pharmaceutical companies, in particular, should strictly follow the rules and regulations and produce safe drugs accessible to and affordable by all the people.

The mass media, by taking advantage of new technologies — especially information and communications technologies — for optimum mobilization and utilization of resources, should make the best of their special edge in publicity to bring more health knowledge to the people and make them more health-conscious.

The civil society, with a multitude of comparative advantages, can serve as an important force in disseminating knowledge of health and for achieving the health-related Millennium Development Goals. UN-NGO-IRENE should be encouraged to strengthen its position as a platform from which to coordinate and assist both national and regional non-governmental organizations in taking concrete actions for global health despite the current financial and economic difficulties.

People of the world, particularly those in less developed countries, are the main actors in striving for the health-related Millennium Development Goals. With due respect for different cultural backgrounds, ethnic traditions and social customs, people around the world should be fully motivated and mobilized to involve themselves in the efforts of raising public-health awareness and consciousness, and discarding unhealthy habits and lifestyles.

Being convinced that the right to public-health services constitutes part of the basic human rights, it is our common aspiration to see a world of harmony where people enjoy good health, and it is our joint mission to make it happen. China's non-governmental organizations welcome and support the undergoing reform of the national medical system away from a profit-seeking to a people-oriented policy. We know it is no easy task for a country with 1.3 billion

people, but a Government that holds the people in its heart should do it, must do it and can do it. We urge the Government of China to work more closely with the people and the medical workers and take resolute measures to ensure success. We are prepared to make relentless efforts for the betterment of public health in partnership with the Government, the private sector, the international community and other stakeholders in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.
